

COPYEDITING EXAMPLE

Ballads of Oræd

by Jean deMers

Important figure - Evarth Vineblood, head gardener. Evarth comes from combined lines of drow, swanfolk, lizardfolk, and demon lineage; a powerful mix among the beastfolk. The gardeners attempt to tame and cultivate some of the most hostile and wild lands in Oræd, outcast from most societies.

Jagged peaks, eternal fires, dragons and other deadly beasts give this land its name. It is here where adventurers either rise to fame and glory, or are devoured and forgotten.

West - The Leagues

Main population - Humans, elves, swanfolk, and half-orcs.

Important figure - Captain Wit Corusk. Corusk was a legendary swordsman before bringing together the various nomadic bands of Oræd to conquer the west and bring about peace. The captain rules quietly in the capital, their sword now hanging on the wall of a throne room.

Though not totally free of troubles, the people of western Oræd live their lives working earnest trades in the various settlements along the coast. Ships are seen constantly travelling up and down the Leagues, sometimes venturing out to the nearby islands.

Hills of Alchemy

Main population - Humans, lizardfolk, elves, and minotaurs.

Important figure - Mayor Knesce. Knesce comes from a long line of nobles who crossed over to the Hills when it was still connected to the rest of Oræd. The mayor respects the magic and lore of the land, and is always willing to share it with good-willed visitors.

The most disconnected from the rest of Oræd, the hills are a somewhat mysterious land, said to be the home of ancient dragons and master mages. Composed almost entirely of sand dunes, living here can take quite some adjustment to those not native.

Snake Elf islands

Main population - Snake elves.

Important figure - Unknown

Little is known about this group of islands that appeared from seemingly nowhere, just off the coast of western Oræd.

Olgatha islands

Main population - Kobolds, awakened plants, travellers, hermits, druids.

Madargon Sundog

Don't believe everything you hear.
I'll tell you the true tale of Nightshade the Conqueror.

Madargon was the name given by orcish pirates to an elf with deep purple skin, known for using deadly poisons in combat. The name translates to nightshade in the common tongue, giving Madargon the other alias of Nightshade the Conqueror. The true name of Madargon is a secret very few know, as few are old enough to have known Madargon before they started pirating. Along with being the most famous pirate, Madargon is believed to be one of the oldest living elves of Oræd, seeing the fall of the old dwarven kingdom.

Despite their fame in Oræd, it is said Madargon arrived on its shores after sailing from the sea of fog to the east, having already lived a full life in distant, unreachable lands. It was soon after this that Madargon began sailing and boarding ships, joining several pirate crews for short periods before many years of working with the orcish pirates. The great success of Madargon's leadership led to the orcs of Oræd changing their way of life completely. Instead of fighting each other for small sections of land, the orcs banded together to control great territories of rivers, bays, and seas. Even after Madargon left to command a single ship, the orcs remained fearsome tyrants of the water.

During Madargon's time with the orcs, they defeated a pair of giant brothers, who controlled an abandoned tower on an island with the help of their pet gryphon. The brothers were said to have fled far away, in search of another ruin to take as their own. Madargon then tricked a crew of smugglers into trading their lives for priceless treasures, which they lost all desire for upon turning undead. Madargon was left with the wealth, but the dangerous skeleton fleet continues to haunt the waves. Soon after, Madargon duelled the wizard who cursed the smugglers, winning his magic, double-bladed rapier as prize. The greatest feat of Madargon and the orc pirates was a battle against a horde of winged demons at the hellmouth. The diabolic creatures swore to seek vengeance against Madargon, but have had no success.

Today, if you saw Madargon and lived to tell about it, you would recall a tall and long-limbed elf, skin like a shaded night over the sea, and flowing hair like a web of ink. Shoulders menacing in metal spikes with a sheen like lantern oil, a brigandine of sturdy plates which no weapon has pierced, and a rich silk cloak which would fit into the grandest halls. Each hand is covered in gem-studded rings with bands of gold, necklaces draped with fine crystals and delicate metalwork.

Some say that Madargon's single ship couldn't hold nearly all the wealth they have accrued, and much must be hidden away in caches on remote islands. It is likely, but who would want to steal from such a fearsome pirate? If you're lucky, you might find someone who is a descendent of a crew member of Madargon, and is willing to share some pirating tactics or recipes for various poisons devised by them.

The Snake Elves

The diminutive elf Norin leads you to a secret door at the base of a tower, and you climb a seemingly endless spiral staircase, until you reach a door which opens to a bridge. The railless stone bridge leads across to another tower, and you feel as though a strong gust could knock you to the rocky ground far below. Once inside the next tower, you ascend again, reaching a bright and open square room. A bright rug leads to a raised throne at the end of the room. On it, a regal figure sits and beckons you forward; it appears exactly as an elf, except for the small horns growing from its head. This elf, as well, is much shorter than any you've seen before.

The elf leader, Hiria, welcomes the party, explaining that her people are the ones known as the Snake Elves. She explains how long ago they lived in peace and harmony with the other races, but soon were frequently attacked to steal the magical relics they recovered from the ocean floor. Hiria used a powerful scroll to hide their islands for many years from outside intruders, but the spell has finally worn off.

The Snake Elves get their name from the snake god they worship, Leuca. For their devotion, Leuca gave this group of elves a great serpent to protect them, who still lives at the top of the tower. They were also given horns, so they would look more like their deity Leuca. Though they were never strongly good or evil, this appearance caused many to fear and mistrust them.

Hiria now wants to know if there is any immediate threat to her people, pleading with the party to stay and help if she hears of the Orcish raiders. Hiria promises a reward of one of their fabled relics of old in return for their help.

Grove of Leuca

You approach an island topped by giant stone sculptures that seem to rise naturally from a hill. The monument depicts a monkey feeding something to a bird. This island feels serene; the only noise that of sea birds and small animals.

This island is deserted of people, but plentiful in rodents, reptiles, and birds. The party can feel a slight magical aura, which emanates from a forested glade, if they check.

The glade is made of strong and old, but leafless, trees. A Unicorn lives there next to a clear pond, and teleports away at first sight of the party.

The unicorn can be asked for help if the party can reason with it why it should help defend the Snake Elves. It will never agree to help the Orcs. If there is an Elf maiden in the party, the unicorn is much easier to convince. The unicorn appears as a powerful creature to the party, but they can also choose to fight it, seeking its valuable horn.

The Puzzle

Free from the total darkness, you enter another room with dim light illuminating it from high above. At the end of the room, in front of a set of huge ornate doors, sitting atop a pedestal is a tall, robed man holding a book. In front of him on the floor, a wooden bowl lies. You see him move slowly on his perch in the low light, as if lost in thought.

This man is actually a statue of the druid, magically animated to appear alive. The statue will not respond to any questions or calls, but will activate once someone is within fifteen feet, close to the wooden bowl. At this point, it will be obvious that it is made of stone. Then, it will close the book and point down to the bowl, and declare in a loud but melodious voice, "Something is missing."

First, the statue will perform the verbal and somatic components for the spell Animal Friendship, then Predict Weather, then Dispel Magic. For the statue to move from the first spell to the second, the party must put the material components into the bowl.

Animal Friendship - a morsel of food

Predict Weather - two lodestones

Dispel Magic - a miniature cloak

If the party brought the awakened stone with them, it will tell them that these are druid spells, but will not be able to tell the exact spells. If needed, it will give more hints that it is the material components that are required. Deciphering Druidic runes in the room will have the characters discover the components of a particular spell. The two lodestones can be mined from a crevice in a wall of the room. Once all three spells' components have been put into the bowl, the large doors behind the statue slowly creak open, revealing a small room with a large pit in its centre.

This smaller room has carved walls and floor tiles, but is very dark once again, obscuring the giant hole. It takes some deft and slow movement to make the way across the small crumbling walkways to either side of the chasm, but once one person makes it across (can use climb sheer surfaces), they can easily help guide the rest. If someone falls, they fall 30 feet and take 2d6 damage, and must find a way back up. There is nothing but broken tiles at the bottom, but careful investigation will find a hidden passage that leads out to the ocean.

The Sewers

Stale air fills the cramped tunnels of the sewer. Decorative carvings among the stonework give the impression that this place had another purpose in that past. Light from the well's opening above pours down to illuminate ancient bones hidden along the walls.

In the series of large and luxurious buildings that make up the mayor's mansion in Knesce. She has been governing the town for some time, but is at a loss of what to do about the recent magic occurrences. The most troubling matter is a recent report of undead amassing below the city. The mayor doesn't know of any entrances large enough for a person to get down into the sewers, so does not believe the undead pose an immediate threat. There are two such entrances though, one below the bridge at the centre of town, beneath the water, where an opening in the rock leads down into the sewers. The other large entrance is through the empty well, if a way is found to get to its bottom. If left long enough, the undead will start making their way into the town at night through the river. Knesce will promise to give an heirloom or her family if they deal with the undead, a magical ring. This is a ring of feather falling.

The sewers are not expansive, but are made of a labyrinth of small hallways, void of light and quite dank. Some of the bodies buried under the town long ago have made their way to these tunnels, and are now being reanimated by a mummy lord who gained power through one of Eruckeb's arcane thoughts, which has taken the place of its heart. These undead are gathered together in a small circular chamber, around 15 feet in diameter, performing a ritual to raise another living dead. Along with the mummy lord, there is a number of wandering skeletons. Unlike most mummy lords, this one will not reanimate, as it has the arcane thought instead of a heart, which will fall as a pearl fang when it is defeated.